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who flatly decreed that his daughter could marry no one but a priest. 159
(Not only are priests well provided for financially, but they can marry 793
only once. This means that they supposedly take exceptionally good 591
care of their mates.) Sava had already completed the commercial gymnasium, had studied for two years in a school for leaders of co-operatives, and planned to attend the university. In order to comply with the demands of his sweetheart's father, however, he interrupted his educational plans long enough to prepare himself for the ecclesiastical examinations, which he passed with credit. He was then assigned to the Dragalevtsy parish. Meanwhile he had married the young lady of his choice. Soon thereafter he obtained leave of absence from his church responsibility in order to complete his work in Finance at the Svoboden (Private) University in Sofia. He was highly respected by the people whom he shepherded and was vitally interested in their welfare.

There were often two or three kibitzers while the intelligentsia 557
played cards. These were lesser officials interested in advancement, or well-to-do peasants who wanted to hobnob with the controlling group. None of these hangers-on had been westernized to the point [291]
of wearing a tie, and some of them still wore the heelless, pointed pigskin sandals.

Oddly enough for a Bulgarian village, the veterinarian and 759
physician were both women, who constantly found the patriarchal 562
traditions stumbling blocks to the winning of village support. The medical doctor was a Russian who had spent part of her childhood in San Francisco, but returned to the University of Petrograd for her medical training. After the Revolution she left Russia with her family.

The only other "educated" people in the village were the 875
teachers, eight in number, selected for their posts by outside school authorities rather than by the villagers themselves. Four of the eight had been born outside the pre-Hitler boundaries of Bulgaria, in territories which irredentist Bulgarians sought to recover permanently. Maria, for example, was from Dobruja, which was then a part of Rumania; Anna and Georgi were born in parts of Macedonia which

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palatable to peasant taste. If the bread supply gave out at the table, the diners sat calmly without eating until the new loaf was brought in, for it was almost impossible for them to eat unless holding a piece of bread in the left hand. Dunking was the approved method of disposing of the juice of a stew. When eating, one was apt to get a greasy coating on the lip; the accepted technique was to scrape this off with a piece of bread already on its way into the mouth. Forks and small spoons were used only when there were guests. But why should table manners not be simple and direct?

"Knives for everybody are not used. There is one knife at the table, but people use their hands, for we peasants say, 'For what did God give the fingers to man if he does not use them to feed himself?' "

As for the preparation of the food:

"Usually it is the duty of the oldest woman in the family to prepare the food, because she knows the best how to cook and she can cook most deliciously of all. In case she is sick, then her daughter-in-law or her daughter cooks. If there are not such, then the man cooks." Here my informant sniffed and added scornfully, "Of course, in such a case dry food is eaten chiefly, but even the men can cook at least some of the dishes."

I asked another woman who really "knew her place," as a Dragalevtsy man would say, whether men could cook:

"Of course, men can do everything woman does, but woman cannot do everything men do. Who cooks for those men that are shepherds or work in the forests but they themselves? Men do not need women half as much as women need men. Yet we all recognize that cooking is for the women, not for the men."

No matter what time of day I entered a village home the *domakinya* (housewife) with unfailing and genuine hospitality offered me food or drink. I began to wonder when the people had their regular meals and found that some homes had no regular mealtimes; instead, people got up and took a piece of bread or anything else available whenever they were hungry. In most families, however, about nine o'clock in the morning a meal called *ruchok* was served to all; at about two, dinner was served, and two hours after sunset the people gathered for supper. One villager put it this way:

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The woman is born
●562 to be a mother. She knows it and, as her duty, should not expect anything from the others."

843 Before the birth of the child, swaddling clothes were prepared, and a cradle and wooden tub were bought. The mother herself was not supposed to sew because it was believed that this would make the baby dumb. In fact, nobody went to any trouble at all to provide an elaborate layette, for that would really seem to the peasants like tempting fate. One of the men asked me, "Who can tell whether it will be a boy or a girl, and most important, who has unnecessary money to throw away in vain, for the baby may die?"

844 At the delivery of the baby, all the young people were sent away, and only the old people and the midwife remained with the mother. "The business of the relatives is to give courage to the mother, and in case the delivery of the child is painful, the midwife massages and carefully pulls the baby out."

The peasants much preferred the midwife or *baba*, to whose old-fashioned ways they were accustomed. To be sure, they called in the village doctor if the case seemed very complicated or if the woman fainted in labor. Dr. Chirkova has encountered many interesting superstitions and folkways in her village experience; these she included in her annual reports to the District Health Office. For instance, since the baby is supposed to be born on straw, in conformity with the birth of Christ, some deliveries occurred in mangers where the doctor was quite apt to find the baby blue with cold. There were instances of women who kept the pains secret from everyone, especially the husband, for they did not "want to add to his troubles." Some of these women even went so far as to remain alone during the childbirth, cutting the cord with a sickle and tying it with their own hair. Such instances, however, were exceptional.

Many deliveries were made with the woman standing, but when labor seemed to be difficult those in attendance put a rope beneath her breasts, tied it to the ceiling, and swung her "in order that the baby
[776] might be born more easily." To lessen the ordeal still more, the *baba* moistened the lips of the woman with an herb called "The Hands of the Holy Virgin," which had been put into a bowl of water. It is assumed that the Virgin will render direct aid.

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When I asked her if she and Dimiter had quarrels about other things, Zdravka answered:

"We don't quarrel for I keep quiet, and he only speaks to me 'between his teeth.'"

Poultry was a source of much ill feeling among neighbor women. Whenever a hen or rooster strayed into the garden next door there was apt to be a verbal battle, the effects of which fortunately wore off within a few days. There was one woman, however, who had not spoken to her next-door neighbor for three years because of harsh words uttered about a straying hen. "May her chickens be homeless," cursed the other person in describing the incident.

In case the women quarreled over such things as chickens, overhanging branches of a fruit tree, or the return of a borrowed article, the men were inclined to treat the whole incident lightly and speak of it as "woman's business." On the other hand, if two men had a serious dispute, their families behaved distantly toward each other, either because of actual antipathy or because of paternal command. From the standpoint of social interaction, therefore, a serious row between two men was more of a strain on the social structure than was a quarrel between two women. It was apt to last longer, involve more people, and have larger issues at stake.

A visit to the village courtroom convinced me that money was also the basis for much misunderstanding. The court records were full of cases of men who had argued over financial matters until one of them haled the other into court. Most of these disputes were settled by the mayor, but many people left his courtroom still dissatisfied. Because the Dragalevtsy peasant was penurious, every lev was cherished and spent only when absolutely necessary. Such frugality was a virtue from one point of view, but it became a vice when it led to disruptive conflict.

This increased emphasis upon money permeated even the family relationships. One woman exclaimed:

"Relatives don't even lend sewing machines to one another without payment. I have a sister-in-law who has a machine, but she won't let my daughters use it unless I pay."

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888 cide was by that time an out-of-date practice no longer linked with the precarious economic existence of a wandering people.

539 But it was a far cry from the cessation of the killing of aged
888 parents to the "Honor thy father and mother" of the Decalogue, which
593 later became a part of the Bulgarian family system. The peasants had another story to explain this dramatic change:

"In the olden days, when fathers died the sons would drag the bodies with a hook to a stream or gully and push the bodies in. One day a middle-aged man returned home from disposing of his father's body in this way, but failed to bring back the hook. Whereupon his own son in greeting him said:

" 'But, father, where is the hook? What will I use when I drag you away?'

"This made the father thoughtful, then remorseful. It was then that he retrieved his father's body and gave it a proper burial. Since then sons have been more respectful."

593 At any rate, whatever may be the explanation, the patriarchal
562 system with its respect for and obedience to the father won out. Con-
175 tact with Byzantine culture until the coming of the Turks must have
186 reinforced the Bulgarian father's right to dominate his family. He became more fully acquainted with the *patria potestas* which had been too strongly entrenched in the Roman family system to be forgotten by the Byzantines. Likewise, the patriarchal emphasis of the Old Testament and the Pauline epistles of the New aided in the continuance
175 of male supremacy. It is fascinating indeed to observe the response that the Slavicized Bulgarians made to the Byzantine culture in general. First they opposed cultural assimilation by force of arms; more than once the armies of the Bulgarian kings thundered at the gates of Constantinople in Bulgaria's proud golden age (about 900). Military expeditions, however, proved inadequate, with the result that the Bulgarian leaders sought to build a Slavic culture to rival that of the Greeks. It was this new culture which kept the feeling of national uniqueness alive among the Bulgarians, while other tribes upon entering that region became so thoroughly absorbed into the Byzantine Empire that they ended as curious names of the past with no modern representatives.

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582 208 married in Dragalevtsy. Because she had a physical deformity her parents had given up all hope of marrying her off since they knew she would be unable to attend properly to her housework and field work. During the first World War there were two old maids in the village who had not been chosen for marriage because each of them had a goiter. A doctor with the German forces cured the goiters [554] and these two unmarried women became desirable prospects, one of them marrying a priest's son in Sofia, one of the highest prizes a village girl could capture in her matrimonial venture.

[208] Since public opinion made life miserable for unmarried women, even a girl of independent temperament looked upon marriage as [562] an inevitable event, especially if she stayed in the village. With men it 581 was different. They could choose to remain unmarried and not lose prestige in the community. People only said: "Well, Asen simply doesn't want to marry. He's a bit shy of skirts, you know."

The young men to whom I talked were outspoken in regard to those qualities which they looked for in choosing a mate: good health, industry, efficiency in the house and field, and proper care of the person. The girls, on the other hand, had little to say regarding the qualities they wanted in a husband. They seemed willing to accept whatever luck brought them. But marry they must.

584 There were many ways in which the husbands and wives had 574 become acquainted with each other. If both had been born in 883 Dragalevtsy, as was the case with a little more than half the couples, they were already aware of the other's characteristics either through personal acquaintance or hearsay. Many of the married couples had played together as children while tending the cattle in the sun-drenched pastures, only to become distant until most of the adolescent period passed. Then began frequent meetings at the fountain at sunset, shy flirtation at the *horo* and *sedenki*, or rambling conversation on the way to and from the Friday market. At the *sedenki*, held by the young people in various girls' homes on winter evenings, games involving forfeits were played. At one *sedenka* I attended, the girl giving out the penalties sent a couple obviously in love to the dark outdoors "to see what the weather was like." A few minutes later she sent a second couple out to see where the first had gone. All four of the

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The girls of Dragalevtsy had no way of proposing to a boy. The girl waited and, if nobody proposed to her, she remained unmarried.

Sometimes unmarried young people had sexual intercourse. If the boy did not want to marry the girl, then she told her parents; the boy was brought before the *Obshtina* and, if the charge was proved, was made to marry the girl. As one peasant said in matchless understatement: "In such cases they do not have a happy life."

One such case occurred during my sojourn in the village and was an exciting topic of conversation. A girl with an unsavory reputation, in the hope of gaining a certain young man as a husband, accused him of having had intimate relations with her; the parents, too, insisted upon his marrying their daughter. He refused and the matter was taken up before the village court, where several of his friends swore that they likewise had had intimate relations with the same girl. Whether the friends swore truthfully or falsely was still a matter of doubt in the minds of many villagers, but the young man was freed from all responsibility in the matter.

Chastity ranked high in the scale of village social values. Even though some couples had illicit relationships before they married, they were running a grave social risk. Public indignation was especially great in the case of illegitimacy. A girl giving birth to an illegitimate child was forced to leave the village. On this subject I had the following conversation with one of the more respected villagers:

"Where does the girl go if she is driven out of the village?"

"She goes to Sofia because she's a bad girl."

"Do the villagers try to find out who the father was and punish him for his part?"

"The father? Why should they? The girl is to blame, not the man."

"Are many illegitimate children born in the near-by villages?"

"In my time [the last thirty-five years] there have been two in Bistritsa, one in Dragalevtsy, and none in Simeonovo."

There was no particular stigma attached to being a widow or a widower, but the village mores decreed that, when remarrying, widows had to choose widowers, and vice versa. The explanation for this went back to the villagers' belief of the afterlife. They thought of

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With women it was quite different, since marriage for them called for major adjustments. Not only did the wife have to become accustomed to the demands and habits of her husband, but she also had to fit into the routine of her husband's parental home. In some cases she had to subordinate herself to other daughters-in-law in the household. Should she and her husband live in a separate dwelling near the husband's childhood homestead, she still was so subject to the scrutiny of the in-laws that she found it expedient to conform to their ways of doing things.

The woman, much more than the man, had to give up the companionship of her former friends to move in the group of the married women of the neighborhood. In these groups she was initiated into much of the folklore about anatomy, conception, childbirth, and child care. The frank discussion by various women of their personal experiences was enough to make any squeamish girl terrified at the very thought of becoming a mother. Continued discussion, however, made the experience eventually seem less of an ordeal; in fact, it was often a source of comfort and encouragement when her time arrived.

These neighborhood gossiping groups did much more than shock the girl into some of the realities of married life; they also informed her of the personal peculiarities of her in-laws and neighbors; they let her know what she should and should not do. And if she was one of the first of her circle of friends to marry, she could look forward to the day when one or two of them would become brides in the vicinity and could join her in the company of these older married women.

The role of these women's groups in the village was interesting and far more important than the surface informality would indicate. Recreation for the older women was generally tied up with work. Distinctions, however, should be made between the women's work groups, such as those for spinning and carding, and women's gossiping groups, in spite of the fact that the membership was the same in both groups and that gossiping was the chief recreation in both instances. In the work groups, the women were invited formally by the hostess, were fed, and were expected to stay most of the day, definitely to work. Gossiping groups, however, were much more informal, since people

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did the most talking. The women found it difficult to say which one helped the others most, because "this depends so much upon one's special knowledge of cooking, caring for the sick, and sewing." Each woman was expert in a different line, but all were willing to help in any way.

The distinction between age groups broke down when the group was hard at work, as the work was then more important than the flow of gossip. In general, the gossiping groups got together more frequently in the summertime and on Sundays. Women found their chief recreation with women, and men with men, though the men said they needed the stimulation of tavern society.

This willingness of the men to spend money for recreation and to limit their wives to the questionable joys of gossip illustrated the common saying, "Bulgaria is a man's country." A Dragalevtsy peasant saw nothing strange in the sight of a man riding a donkey while his wife trudged along behind carrying their purchases home from market. Or if a man returned alone from market, having ridden all the way in his wagon, his wife, tired from a day in the field, went out to carry in his things, saying, "He's weary and needs my help." She was always careful to make no queries about the day's activities, although she might be bursting with curiosity to know what had happened at market. She went about her work and waited until he was comfortably fed and settled, knowing full well that then she would have a complete report. Usually her husband made himself out to be the hero of each little episode, but "men are like that," she would say.

The well trained wife always deferred to her husband. If ever I asked a question in the presence of both, the woman turned her eyes to see what response her husband made. If he made a gesture as though to say, "You go ahead and answer," then she began to talk, becoming silent whenever her husband wished to interject any comments.

What was even more conclusive proof that Bulgaria was a man's country, and certainly that Dragalevtsy was a man's village, was the obedience of women to their husband's command. I asked thirty wives in the course of my family interviews:

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"Suppose you wanted to go to market some Friday and your husband thought you ought not to go, what would you do?"

Not a single wife would dare go to market under these circumstances. Two or three said, "I wouldn't even start for the door."

"But suppose you wanted to make some small purchases in the city and your husband disapproved, what would you do?" Only two daring ones out of the thirty said they would make these purchases if they had money.

It paid the women to "behave," because the husband did have the right to beat a disrespectful wife. I never happened upon a wife-beating, but the fact that a few husbands told me with pride, "I never beat my wife," showed me that they considered themselves exceptional.

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A wife who received rough treatment, especially if her husband had been drinking, could go to her father's home. She could not stay there very long after her mate had become sober, because her father and the village in general made her feel that her place was with her husband no matter how disagreeable he might be. Usually she waited until her husband came with a meek promise of good behavior to ask her to come back.

In those formal ways a village wife showed respect to her husband. She did not, most of the time, find them burdensome because she knew nothing else. All of her experiences from childhood to marriage had conditioned her to a subordinate role. Should any woman have tried to rebel against her lot other women would have been her most vigorous critics. They, more than the men, aided in the perpetuation of the existing order.

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The woman, however, had a far more important place than the social amenities would indicate. Men frankly admitted that they could not make a living without their wives. This feeling of dependence overshadowed the traditional masculine superiority to the extent that a partnership resulted. The man, to be sure, was the senior partner, but he knew that he was a member of a team in which co-operation was essential.

This deeper sense of partnership was best shown by the practice husbands had of consulting their wives on every matter of importance as well as on minor matters. Out of twenty-six representative cases,

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"Bulgaria is a man's country."
See page 95.

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"The neighborhood gossiping groups did much more than shock the girl into some of the realities of married life . . ." See page 93.

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nineteen husbands always consulted their wives before doing anything such as selling a calf, hiring a servant, or building a small stable; four husbands consulted sometimes, and only three were so strong-willed and dominating that they never asked their wives' opinions. Many husbands said that their wives knew more than they did about the management of the farm, though these same wives modestly asserted that they knew very little. One man said: "That's why we are married: to ask each other." Quite a few husbands, having learned that it paid in the long run to consult the women, betrayed this by saying, "We have to ask," or "We have to listen to women."

Consulting, however, was not always the same as catering to the wives' wishes. I asked twenty-six husbands: "Suppose you had set your heart on buying something but your wife objected, what would you do?" Twelve said they would make the purchase anyway, three hedged a little in their answers, but eleven would buy nothing contrary to the wishes of their wives. This last group of eleven showed that to many men the judgment or wishes of the women meant far more than one would expect in "a man's country."

Much of a woman's hold upon her husband came about quite unconsciously on the part of either. The village wife was artless and ignorant of the wiles of a sophisticated society, but she knew that as long as she was efficient, decorous, and dutiful she could count upon continued support from her husband. She also knew that she was not in competition with adventuresses or with women, jaded and disappointed, frantically seeking excitement to enliven their days. Instead, the Dragalevtsy woman felt secure. With her there was a solemn finality about marriage to which her husband and others in the village subscribed.

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She expected no courteous gestures or terms of endearment from her husband. Her name sufficed. Only three couples out of twenty-seven used affectionate names for each other, these taking such forms as *bulka* (bride), *baba* (old woman), and the like, but never *dear, darling,* or *sweetheart.* One of the three men who used such names saved them for times when his wife did not listen, and then he used several to get her attention. The occidental practice of kissing was little used by the married couples, though the younger generation was

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beginning to imitate "the people of the world" in this respect. As the psychological aspect of the sexual relationship between husband and wife varied with each couple, no generalization could be made except to point out that sex seemed to be a concomitant of marriage rather than the basis of marriage. Mates were picked by young men more for their potentialities as hard-working farm hands than for their sexual attractiveness. Quite often before marriage a sort of affection had grown up between the couple; more often affection came after marriage and increased as the partnership proved successful and the feeling of mutual dependence deepened.

Most of these couples freely, sometimes jokingly, admitted that they quarreled more or less, even when they were in many respects fortunately adjusted to each other. Nevertheless, in only one-third of the cases did this quarreling lead to a permanent cause of conflict.

The disciplining of children by the husband frequently aroused the wife to indignation, but perhaps not to such a depth as did his late arrival from the tavern in an intoxicated condition. Few Bulgarian men drank to get drunk. Intoxication, when it came, was often the result of overenthusiastic observance of drinking customs. For instance, when men drank in the saloon all of them ordered drink and food not only for themselves but for the whole table, everybody paying for what he had ordered before leaving; the people always toasted health, long life, or happiness when they raised a glass of wine, beer, or whisky, at home, in the tavern, or in the field; at feasts *rakiya* was served before the people began to eat; during the meal they drank wine. A drunken man was sent out of the tavern at closing time, and it was up to him to get himself home, even though he fell down several times en route. If he was having too great a difficulty, some companions might lead him. If they were not around, the policeman or night watchman might act as guide. At his approach, the children hid and the wife became afraid. The villagers said: "Even an insane man runs away from the drunken." Sometimes in order to sober up the drunken man, people put a little urine or horse manure (substances rich with ammonia) in his mouth. The chief complaint the women made against drinking was economic, The spending of money "for nothing," as they said.

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assets. They could do hard work; they could run countless errands. 858
Later, they were the heirs to the father's fields and the chief support of the parents in their declining years.

One of the first women I interviewed about family life told me: "I had a little boy but he died when forty days old. Now I cannot help crying every St. George's Day [May 6] and every St. Dimiter's Day [November 8] when my husband goes out to hire a boy to care for our sheep. If my son had lived, he could have taken care of the sheep for us."

Later on in the course of a conversation with a garrulous *baba* I asked her if she did not think her seven children too many for one woman to have. She snorted, pointed out of the window to her sons unloading wood they had gathered in the forest, and said: "If I hadn't had lots of children, who would go to get our wood?"

Sons were greater economic assets than girls but even so would 858
have normally received more attention in this man-centered society. 562
As parents often had to go to some expense to get their daughters 593
married off, they were always jubilant at the arrival of a son. The good-natured priest was occasionally the butt of a number of sly jests because he had three daughters and no son. One man in particular, Stefan, who had been in the same predicament, had recently acquired a son, who was now the apple of his eye. He was fond of his daughters, but made no secret of his particular pride in his boy. I thoroughly enjoyed a conversation between Stefan and the priest in which Stefan fully explained how to be sure the next one was a boy. I have known of fathers who refused to look at the newly arrived infant upon learning that it was a girl. Of course, they eventually acquiesced and simply hoped for better luck next time. Where parents had no sons, village curiosity reached a peak when a new child was expected, and an occasional wager was laid on the possibility of its being a boy. But favoritism was the exception rather than the rule. When you asked a Dragalevtsy parent which child he liked best he responded: "I like them all equally; they are just like the fingers on one's hand." He often added the proverb, "The fingers on one's hand feel pain equally, do they not?"

Whenever a child suffered from a physical or mental handicap 732
Dragalevtsy parents, like most parents around the world, were more 593
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for, in the words of his father, "he does not like the village work and wants something lighter. He wants to go to Sofia." The son obeyed his father most of the time as regards work assigned, but paid less attention to what his mother said. He went with any girl he liked, though his father, who in his youth married a girl of whom his parents had disapproved, insisted that if the son did the same, he would turn the son's wife out into the street. 593

This case was quite typical of most village young men. They performed, though unwillingly at times, whatever tasks their father ordered them to do, but paid little attention to the mother, since "she is a woman and doesn't understand man's work." A smaller number listened to the advice of their parents in the choice of girl friends, but most looked upon that as a personal matter in which parents should not interfere. One father who made a matter-of-fact adjustment to the situation said, "I can't keep a candle for my son in the streets," meaning that he could not go before him to light up his path.

When young men kicked against the traces, the older people did not become particularly disturbed. At times they were annoyed, but there was a general feeling that once the boy got married he would settle down to the conventional routine. This tolerant viewpoint was supported by even the staid middle-aged men, who liked to give the impression that they had been wild and troublesome in their youth. This complacency would have been less widespread if the parents had realized how greatly conditions had changed in one generation.

Unmarried daughters caused little trouble to their parents. They were ordinarily obedient to both father and mother, but, like the sons, quarrelled most often with their mothers, for they were with them more and felt that the mother loved them more than the father. Daughters in three-fourths of Dragalevtsy's homes went with any boys they chose, though some parents were firm in stating that the young man must be suitable before they gave their consent to marriage. It was highly doubtful whether this threat had much effect on the young. One father, apparently devoted to his twenty-year-old daughter, whipped her for going with young men of whom he disapproved and quarreled much with his son of eighteen. [562]

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If a daughter failed to marry, she spent the rest of her life in her father's home and received sympathy only as long as her mother was alive. Her father and married brothers thought of her as a servant in the home and treated her accordingly. Fortunately there was rarely more than one old maid at a time in Dragalevtsy.

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The treatment of younger children, of course, varied greatly with the home. Children in Dragalevtsy were accustomed to being yelled at from their first toddling days by displeased older people. As we have already seen, there was no question about boys being preferred to girls in most homes, especially if there was only one boy among several girls. In such homes it was the boy who received the presents when the father returned from town, and who was picked up first; it was the boy whom the parents held when they asked to be photographed.

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Whipping, which was usually done by the father, was such an effective check on misbehavior that parents often needed only to threaten it. Another method of punishment was to withhold bread from the child for two or three hours, but, as one father said, "This doesn't always work, especially if the child begins to cry."

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Some parents, when they were unable to make ends meet, sent a girl off to Sofia to work as a domestic. One family revealed that five years previously a twelve-year-old daughter had been sent to be a servant in Sofia; she would never return to the village to live, nor did she ever come to visit. In this case the parents could not support an extra person, so chose the simplest way out. The fact that many Bulgarian families in cities sought female servants from twelve to eighteen years of age made such a practice possible. Indeed, on St. Dimiter's Day (November 8) and St. George's Day (May 6) there used to be a "servant bazaar" in Sofia. Village girls went to a certain place and stood in a row where housewives could look them over like heifers and choose a maid. Changes in servants, including shepherds, were ordinarily made only at these two times during the year.

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Should parents find a job for a teen-aged boy, the father might require the boy to accept the job. Most boys wanted work; only a few resented working at all. If a father had more sons than he needed on the farm, he sometimes chose a trade for or with the boy. Such

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to return or remain, the girl decided to go back to her parents. In 1937 this would have made her ineligible, in a sense, for further consideration as a wife. Now she simply explained that when the boy had asked her in advance if she would marry him she had thought that he was joking and told him "Yes," in what she considered to be a jesting manner. She was greatly surprised two weeks later to find that the boy had been serious. The whole affair turned out happily in the end because within another two weeks the young man had found a willing girl, had become engaged to her, and married her.

Another evidence that the family system was having to change to meet the stress of new times was the lack of social disapproval shown to widows and widowers who married persons previously unmarried. Heretofore, only widows and widowers could marry each other, and this was chiefly because of economic necessity. Although not yet common, it was a growing practice for a widower to take a fancy to a girl whom he later married. The age of marriage was becoming lower, dropping to 18 and 19 years for many of the couples. The engagement period still lasted only one or two weeks, a time sufficient to allow the girl to make her wedding preparations.

Accompanying these changes was a greater freedom among the young people both in relation to each other and in relation to their parents. The *sedenki* for young people followed practically the same patterns which I had previously observed but had not yet popularized the kissing games which featured *sedenki* in northern Bulgaria. Clandestine love-making was increasing as was the tendency on the part of the young people to pair off.

The changed relationship of sons to their fathers was shown by the failure of many of the sons to turn over their earnings to their parents as part of the common family treasury. Formerly more than half of the young men had followed this practice, but estimates in 1945 placed the number at approximately one out of ten.

Of especial interest was the pattern which younger couples were establishing after marriage. Whereas, ten years ago even the young wife would have given implicit obedience to her husband's orders, today many of the families were becoming equalitarian. The older women, however, still clung to the patriarchal pattern, though they

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[562] 178 593 were willing to grant that the changes introduced by the young people were a part of the times and might not be so bad after all. In talking to these older women I noted a touch of envy, which I would not have suspected ten years ago.

In contrast to these changes many phases of the family system remained the same. These included the attitude of intolerance towards a childless couple, the role of the mother-in-law in the caring for infants, the parents' preference for boys, the reserve between father and the children, the continued dwelling of many married sons with their fathers, and the importance attached to being an older brother or sister in the family. The godparent relationship and the attitude towards the *svatovstvo* (in-law relationships) were still of major importance.

[848] The moral standards remained relatively rigid, with continuing intolerance toward illegitimacy. The one such case within the past ten years[1] had caused a great amount of unfavorable comment. The mother resolved her predicament by leaving her child with relatives in the village and marrying in another place.

178 183 Many other traditional practices besides those related to the family still maintained their strong grip on the people. The Christmas Horo took place as always and the Sunday afternoon promenade had become more firmly established. The *babi* (older women) were called in whenever illness or childbirth occurred. The smaller families, of course, numbered fewer children these days, but the *babi* were kept just as busy since the state-employed midwife no longer worked for the Obshtina. The dead were buried much the same as formerly, although the priest forbade people to cry messages to the dead while the funeral procession paused at the crossroads on the way from the home to the church.

[527] The people still made much of the mice and wolf holidays. One day after St. Dimiter's Day (November 9) the peasants continued to fast to keep the mice from coming in and eating up not only stored food but even clothes and other prized possessions. Bai Yurdan, the tailor, told me in all seriousness, "When I was in Sofia I didn't observe such holidays but now that I am back in the village I must."

[1] [i.e. 1935 - 1945 -- Analyst]